

**EdBlast! — All
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Message from the State Superintendent of Education

This week schools and communities across the nation held observances in honor of American Education Week. The theme, “Great Public Schools: A Basic Right and Our Responsibility,” highlights the importance of bringing together educators, school staff, parents, students, and communities in a unified effort to build great public schools. The theme also reflects a vision of calling upon America to provide students with quality public schools so that they can grow, prosper, and achieve in the 21st century.

Our public schools are the backbone of our democracy, providing young people with the tools they need to maintain our nation's precious values of freedom, civility, and equality. Academic success is inextricably intertwined to our state’s future and economic health.

As we approach the Thanksgiving holiday, our thoughts turn to the people in our lives for whom we are grateful. South Carolina is blessed to have thousands of dedicated educators who are making a positive difference in the lives of our children every day. Thank you—teachers instructional assistants, nurses, therapists, counselors, administrators, resource officers, cafeteria workers, custodians, other support staff, and volunteers—for all that you do.

Happy Thanksgiving!

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Department releases annual School Report Card ratings

South Carolina school report card ratings declined in 2006 for only the second time since state and federal accountability laws were enacted. To read about the results, visit:

<http://www.ed.sc.gov/news/more.cfm?articleID=712>

State Higher Education Commission adopts new requirements

The Commission on Higher Education has adopted new college prerequisite course requirements that will be effective for freshmen entering four-year colleges in 2011 and beyond. The main changes include an additional unit in math (from 3 to 4), a unit in the fine arts, and only one elective unit (instead of four). The requirements can be viewed at:

http://www.che.sc.gov/New_Web/GoingToCollege/CollPrepPrereq.htm

State Department sponsors crisis management workshop

Dr. Mark Lerner, chairman of the National Center for Crisis Management and president of the American Academy of Experts in Traumatic Stress, will present a workshop entitled "Managing School-Based Crises" on January 18, 2006, at the South Carolina Department of History and Archives. Learner is a clinical and school psychologist, author, speaker, and traumatic stress consultant. Registration, which includes a copy of "A Practical Guide for Crisis Response in Our Schools," is \$50. For an additional fee, participants may take the examination for board certification in school crisis response. Recertification credit is also available. Contact Sally Barefoot (sbarefoot@ed.sc.gov) at 803-734-8304 for more information.

Program of Alternative Certification accepting applications

The Program of Alternative Certification for Education (PACE) is accepting applications for PACE Cohort 5 instructors and lead instructors. The deadline to apply is November 30. The complete application is available at:

<http://www.scteachers.org>

Middle school program to re-broadcast

South Carolina Educational Television will re-broadcast a special featuring three middle schools on November 20 from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. on ITV (in school ETV channel 301). Palmetto Middle School, Pickens Middle School, and Rawlinson Road Middle School are using the Environment as the Integrating Context (EIC) for learning model supported by the SC State Department of Education and founded by SEER (State Education and Environment Roundtable).

Medieval Times has Educator Appreciation Days

Medieval Times Dinner & Tournament is an evening of family entertainment based upon the glory of the Middle Ages. Guests experience pageantry, horsemanship, swordplay, falconry, sorcery, and romance while feasting on a four-course medieval banquet. The program's Educator Days runs through November 25. General admission is discounted 50% for educators from North and South Carolina with valid identification. Mention discount code: TA06. For more information, contact Jennifer Willard at 843-236-4650 or visit:

<http://www.medievaltimes.com/>

College Board accepting applications for two awards

The College Board is accepting applications for two prestigious awards: the 2007 Inspiration Awards and the Bob Costas Grants for the Teaching of Writing. The Inspiration Awards celebrate America's most improved high schools, awarding three winning schools with \$25,000 each. The Bob Costas Grants recognize six exceptional teachers of grades 6 through 12 for the innovative methods they use to develop their students' writing skills. Grants of \$2,000 are awarded to each winner. Application deadline for both programs is November 17. For more information, visit:

<http://www.collegeboard.com/about/association/inspiration.html>

http://www.collegeboard.com/counselors/teachers/costas_grants.html

S.C. students still have time to enter writing contest

South Carolina students can test their creative skills with two upcoming contests sponsored by the South Carolina Center for the Book. Applications are being accepted until December 8 for the national Letters About Literature competition. To enter, participants write a letter to an author, past or present, describing how that author's work made an impact. For more information, contact Jane Connor at 803-734-8658 or visit:

<http://www.loc.gov/loc/cfbook/letters.html>

<http://www.sccenterforthebook.org/>

International poetry and art contest open

River of Words, an international poetry and art contest focusing on watersheds, is open to students ages 5 to 19. The competition is designed to help youth explore the natural and cultural history of the place in which they live, and to express, through poetry and art, what they discover. The deadline for entries for River of Words is Feb. 15. Students may enter on their own or as part of a group. For more information, visit:

<http://www.riverofwords.org/>

<http://www.sccenterforthebook.org/>

Passports requirements extended

Students, teachers, and chaperones traveling by air will be required to carry a valid U.S. passport to reenter the United States starting Jan. 8, 2007, according to a new regulation issued by the U.S. Departments of Homeland Security and State. The new plan, the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), adds Mexico, Canada, the Caribbean, and Bermuda to locations requiring a passport or selected other documents. Information about obtaining passports can be found by calling the National Passport Information Center at 877-487-2778 or by visiting:

<http://www.state.gov>

Character awards program honors schools and districts

The 2007 National Schools of Character Awards Program names public and private schools and districts as National Schools of Character (NSOC) for their outstanding work in character education. The program honors recipients, showcases their work, and helps them to inspire and lead others. The maximum award is \$20,000, and the deadline for applications is December 4. For more information, visit:

<http://www.reading.org/downloads/awards/smith.pdf>

Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award accepting applications

The Astronauts Memorial Foundation Alan Shepard Technology in Education Award rewards excellence in the development and delivery of technology programs in the classroom with students or in the professional development of teachers. Educators in grades K-12 and district-level personnel are eligible to apply. The deadline is January 31, 2007. For more information, go to:

http://www.amfcse.org/Alan%20Shepard%20Award/alan_shepard_award.htm

Michelin Convention offers students opportunity

The 9th annual Michelin North America 2007 Invention Convention is an opportunity for 4th – 8th grade students. The event will be held February 5-6, 2007, at the B-Lo Center in Greenville. The object of the convention is to challenge the imagination, innovation, and creativity of students in the development of solutions to everyday issues. The deadline for registrations is January 28. For additional information, contact Katie Joner (KatieJoner@clearchannel.com) at 864-271-5150.

Roper Mountain Science Center sponsors P.L.U.S. Institute

Roper Mountain Science Center is again sponsoring the Science P.L.U.S. Institute for the state's public school science teachers. In its 15th year, the institute helps to promote hands-on, standards-based science instruction in South Carolina's public schools, grades 1-8. Each participant receives science classroom materials worth at least \$500. For more information, call 864-355-8920, or visit:

<http://ropermountain.org>

Reading contest open

Storyteller Tim Lowry, a nationally-known children's performer and American history specialist, is sponsoring a Cowboy & Indian Quiz contest for public, private, and home school students in elementary grades 3-5. Entries will be accepted through November 30, 2006. For contest rules and an entry form, e-mail timlowry@surfguardian.net or log on to the Kid's Page:

<http://www.storytellertimlowry.com/>

Donate Life South Carolina sponsors poster contest

The Paula Moore Dillingham Memorial Poster Contest promotes organ and tissue donation in South Carolina. Sponsored by Donate Life South Carolina for elementary, middle, and high school students, the contest offers students and teachers a positive experience along with raising awareness about this issue. The deadline is March 2, 2007. For more information about the contest, including entry rules, call 877-277-4866, e-mail smcadams@donatelifesc.org, or visit:

<http://donatelifesc.org>

Junior Symposium planned at University of South Carolina-Columbia

The Junior Science and Humanities Symposia (JSHS) program promotes original research and experimentation in science, engineering, and mathematics at the high school level, and publicly recognizes student for outstanding achievement. The JSHS provides a forum for high school students to present the result of their original research. Students who participate meet and exchange ideas, interact with practicing researchers, and

explore academic and career opportunities. A symposium will be held at the University of South Carolina on Friday, January 26, 2007. The deadline for letters of intent to participate is November 17, and the deadline for the submission of papers is December 15. For more information, contact Don M. Jordan (Jordan@gwm.sc.edu) or visit:

<http://www.hrsn.sc.edu/jordan/>

School librarians association seeks nominations

The South Carolina Association of School Librarians (SCASL) is seeking nominations for its annual awards. Awards include Administrator of the Year, Media Specialist of the Year, Distinguished Service Award, Nancy Jane Day Scholarship, and the Margaret Ehrhardt Student Scholarship. The deadline for submissions is December 1. To download the award packet, visit:

<http://www.scasl.net/awards.htm>

University of Iowa offers special graduate assistantships

The College of Education at the University of Iowa has special assistantships in education available to persons wanting to pursue graduate study in several fields of study. The stipends are \$16,730. The deadline is March 2, 2007. For more information, write: Chair, SGA Selection Committee, The University of Iowa, 340 Lindquist Center, Iowa City, IA 52242-1529.

Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities offers several programs

The Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities offers several programs in creative writing, drama, music, and visual arts. Offerings range from intensive two-week programs for rising ninth graders and tenth graders to a summer dance program and teacher institutes. For more information, e-mail admissions@scgsah.state.sc.us or visit:

<http://www.scgsah.state.sc.us/index.php>

South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo 2007 set

The South Carolina Assistive Technology Expo 2007 will be held Thursday, March 29, 2007, from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. at the Columbia Metropolitan Convention Center. This event will include exhibits and workshops about the latest assistive technology for people with disabilities and age-related limitations. It is free and open to the public, and no pre-registration is necessary. To make suggestions and for more information, contact Mary Alice Bechtler (maryab@cdd.sc.edu) or Janet Jendron (jjendron@usit.net) or visit:

<http://www.sc.edu/scatp/atexpo07.html>

Charleston County councilman is November's calendar feature

Curtis Inabinett lived a life where very little came easy. So he learned to lean on his quiet, persistent nature to get the education that would make him a leader. That meant riding his bike 17 miles to school each day. And in him grew an understanding of the simple power of showing up everyday. The first African-American mayor of Ravelle, Inabinett is a member of the Charleston County Council. To read more visit:

<http://scafam-hist.org/currenthonoree.asp?month=11&year=2006>

This issue's quotation

EdBlast! welcomes submissions

Do you need help in publicizing an education news item that would be of interest to a statewide audience? Send your information to jfairnot@ed.sc.gov or call Janice Larrymore Fairnot, EdBlast! editor, at 803-734-8999.

Spread the word about EdBlast!

We need your help in spreading the word about EdBlast!, the State Department of Education's e-newsletter. Here's the sign-up link:

<http://ed.sc.gov/tools/edblast/>

Thanks for sharing!